



Memorandum

TO: NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES AND
EDUCATION COMMITTEE

FROM: Jon Cicirelli

**SUBJECT: CITYWIDE AGE-FRIENDLY
ACTION PLAN AND OLDER
ADULT/SENIOR SERVICES
PROGRAMS UPDATE**

DATE: September 27, 2021

Approved

Date

10/5/21

RECOMMENDATION

Accept the status report on the Citywide Age-Friendly Action Plan and Older Adult/Senior Services programs.

OUTCOME

The Neighborhood Services and Education Committee will be informed of the current Senior Services service delivery model during the COVID-19 pandemic; accomplishments of the Senior Services team, including the Senior Nutrition Program; and, updates to return our Older Adults to in-person programming. Staff will also provide the Committee an update on the Age-Friendly Initiative implementation.

BACKGROUND

Data has shown that San José's older population is growing rapidly. What was once a population pyramid is fast becoming a population rectangle. Approximately 13 percent of San José residents (121,000) are now over age 65, a percentage estimated to grow to well over 20 percent by 2030. California's Department of Aging estimates that in Santa Clara County, the over-60 population will grow by over 200 percent from 2010 to 2060, with the numbers of people over 85 projected to increase by 605 percent during that same period.

Recognizing these trends, in 2016, the City of San José joined the World Health Organization's (WHO) Global Network for Age-Friendly Cities and Communities and the AARP's Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities, following the City Council's unanimous approval of the initiative in October 2015.

A Three-Year Action Plan (“Action Plan”) was developed based on meetings with representatives from multiple City departments and offices to discuss supporting existing Age-Friendly initiatives and identify additional related efforts. The Action Plan was comprised of data from community focus groups, a 2018 health and wellness survey of older adults, and a 2019 roundtable on the social isolation of older adults.

Under WHO and AARP Age-Friendly guidelines, the next step in the process is the submission of a Three-Year Age-Friendly Action Plan. The City Manager’s Office has designated the Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services (PRNS) as the lead in working with City departments and partners to prepare the San José Age-Friendly Three-Year Action Plan, which was completed and unanimously approved by the City Council on October 20, 2020.

Based on the current service delivery models and the initiatives identified in the Action Plan, the Senior Services team continues to align their work with the following long-term participant and community outcomes:

- Increase civic and social engagement among older adults and decrease social isolation and loneliness;
- Increase awareness and access of community resources available to older adults to address food insecurities, transportation barriers, legal issues, housing needs, etc.;
- Increase access to digital devices, broadband connectivity, and improved digital literacy skills; and
- Improve physical health and safety of older adults through participation in evidence-based programs.

ANALYSIS

To date, Senior Services continues to strive to increase healthy outcomes and reduce social isolation among older adults through a variety of active adult programs (ages 50 and older), civic engagement opportunities, and access to community resources. As a result of COVID-19, Senior Services’ delivery models were adapted to reduce participants’ and staff’s risks of exposure. The congregate meal program transitioned into a curbside pickup model continuing to provide meals to older adults experiencing food insecurity and act as a resource hub of information. To continue providing social engagement, recreation programming moved onto digital platforms. As a result of the transition to virtual services and programs, the PRNS Senior Services team developed and implemented strategies to address the digital literacy gap among older adults and reduce barriers to engagement.

In spring 2021, PRNS successfully submitted a grant proposal to Sourcewise to facilitate removing these digital barriers using CARES Act funding. The grant funded the Older Adult – Digital Engagement Project, including the development of systems to increase access to broadband internet, digital devices, and supported digital literacy skill-building through classes and free virtual recreation opportunities. As the pandemic continues, the Senior Services team is

assessing the transition back to in-person programing for both the Senior Nutrition Program (SNP) and Active Adult 50+ programs while continuing to build off the success of digital and virtual programming. The PRNS team continues to support civic engagement by collaborating with the community center senior advisory boards and by staffing the Senior Citizen Commission.

Senior Nutrition Program

Through a partnership with Santa Clara County's Social Services Agency, the SNP continues addressing food insecurity among adults aged 60 and older. Prior to the pandemic the program operated at 13 centers as a congregate meal model serving on average 650 daily participants. As a result of the pandemic, the SNP paused congregate meals and shifted operations to a curbside pickup model. The curbside nutrition program has experienced a growth in output that peaked at nearly 1,600 daily meals, an increase of 146% from its baseline. For September 2021, the average daily meals distributed was 1,475. Strategies expanding access to meals allowed family members and caregivers to pick up meals for older adults who were home, isolating to prevent COVID-19 exposure, experienced mobility and transportation challenges, relied upon access to a monthly bus pass for new SNP participants, and taxi services to and from the community centers.

In 2020 and throughout 2021, the SNP also expanded meal coverage past regular operation days to ensure meal coverage into weekend and holiday closures through distribution of prepacked shelf stable meals. The SNP also served as a communication hub for important COVID-19 relief news and resources. Sites posted a-frame signs with information on the Virtual Local Assistance Center, various Senior Health and Wellness Grantees distributed information regarding housing, legal advice, free dental care, caregiver support, etc. Staff supporting the SNP also placed wellness calls, completed risk assessments, and provided information on local vaccination and testing. These services addressing food insecurities to vulnerable populations and providing them with valuable resources to navigate the pandemic and reduce social isolation were offered at:

CSJ – Senior Nutrition Program	
Community Center	District
Alma Community Center (NCP)*	District 7
Almaden Community Center	District 10
Alviso Library	District 4
Berryessa Community Center	District 4
Camden Community Center	District 9
Cypress Community & Senior Center	District 1
Evergreen Community Center	District 8
Gardner Community Center (NCP)*	District 3
Mayfair Community Center	District 5
Northside Community Center	District 3
Roosevelt Community Center	District 3
Seven Trees Community Center	District 7

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Southside Community Center	District 2
Willow Glen Community	District 6

*Neighborhood Center Partnership Program (formerly Reuse)

Active Adult 50+ Program

The pandemic created an increased reliance on digital platforms to receive news along with valuable information and access to community services and resources. As a result, Senior Services expanded their efforts to reach older adults lacking digital connectivity. Sites shifted out of in-person programming and piloted a variety of virtual programs through the department's Virtual Recreation Center. Through initial pilot programs, areas of focus to reduce barriers to engagement were identified.

Starting in the fall of 2020, Active Adult Memberships were offered at no cost (previously \$10 per year) to all eligible adults over the age of 50. The membership offers reduced pricing on events, programs, and provided the Senior Services team with the ability to stay connected to participants by distributing monthly newsletters and information related to COVID-19 and community resources.

To ensure the continuum of services, PRNS applied for and was awarded \$49,008 in CARES Act Title III funding through Sourcewise. The newly funded Older Adults – Digital Engagement Project included a digital device loaning program; assistance with acquiring low-cost broadband connectivity; access to free digital literacy courses; a digital wellness coach who would provide wellness calls throughout the duration of the program; and free virtual recreation opportunities. Through the Older Adults – Digital Engagement Project, Senior Services staff provided over 200 hours of virtual programming, reaching approximately 200 unique older adults, resulting in an additional 1,863 units of service. Centers are now planning to shift to in-person operations. As a result, Senior Services plans to offer a hybrid format of programming that will include traditional in-person activities, remote virtual programs, and in-person programming that teaches digital literacy skills.

Senior Health and Wellness Grant Program

PRNS distributes \$511,000 annually in grant funding to nonprofit agencies through the Senior Health and Wellness Grant Program. The program seeks to reduce social isolation and improve the health and wellness of individuals ages 60+ through supportive services, Age-Friendly programming, health and wellness promotion and educational classes. As with other City programs, the delivery model of the Senior Health and Wellness Grant Program provided by grantees were adjusted to fit with COVID-19 safety standards. Grantees shifted programming to a virtual format and for low digital connectivity participants, grantees provided content in the form of resource bundles distributed through the City's Senior Nutrition Program.

For the most recent grant cycle, grantees reported an increase in need from participants for food resources, assistance in navigating medical needs, access to legal services, and social interactions. Additionally, participants shared that the lack of digital devices, lack of skills in using said devices, and knowledge of digital platforms such as Zoom negatively impacted their accessibility to community resources. At the start of 2021, the Senior Health and Wellness Program began identifying priorities and service areas for the next 3-year cycle of funding. In

July 2021, the Request for Proposals went live with applications reviewed in late summer 2021. Awarded agencies are set to start services in October 2021.

Age-Friendly City Initiative

PRNS continues to utilize the San José Age-Friendly Initiative and Action Plan as a guiding document and resource in all the programming offered. Once it is deemed safe to do so, as PRNS looks to eventually return to in-person programming, it will utilize the Age-Friendly Initiatives to guide and support the program planning, implementation, and evaluation of success with the following efforts:

1. Transportation;
2. Outdoor Spaces and Buildings;
3. Housing;
4. Communication, Information, and Technology;
5. Community Support and Health Services;
6. Social and Civic Engagement; and
7. Employment and Financial Security

PRNS will also utilize County recommendations related to the pandemic and feedback from the Senior Advisory Councils and the Senior Commission to ensure a well-rounded and successful return to in-person programs and services.

The Senior Services team will continue implementing the San José Age-Friendly Three-Year Action Plan. This includes virtual programs, the SNP curbside program, and bringing all these efforts back to in-person services. Given that many of the staff necessary to support this initiative have been assigned to the Emergency Operations Center or related activities for the past 18 months, the team has been focused on how to support the initiatives within the virtual environment and the SNP curbside pickup model. As we transition back to in-person programming, PRNS will look for opportunities to activate the Action Plan and support active adults in a safe return to Community Center activities. An example of a current effort is PRNS partnering with the Department of Transportation Vision Zero team to provide online presentations and physical handouts on how seniors can safely walk to their community centers.

It is a high priority of the Senior Services team to reestablish the Age-Friendly Advisory Board consisting of both internal and external stakeholders to support the Age-Friendly initiatives and ensure a well-rounded outcome for active adults. Staff will be working to engage previous partners and new partners in the upcoming year and establish a quarterly meeting consistent with the pre-pandemic model.

CONCLUSION

The Age-Friendly Action Plan will continue to make progress over the next three years in key areas that determine the city's age-friendliness while balancing the impacts of COVID-19. The result will be a cross-departmental and multi-jurisdiction collaboration that will make the city more livable for people of all ages and more adaptable to the city's changing demographics. The Senior Services team continues to be invaluable for the community. Even though the pandemic posed significant challenges, the team evolved and provided innovative programming opportunities to engage the most vulnerable populations, older adults, while also shifting the SNP model into a curbside meal service to meet a substantial food insecurity need throughout the community.

EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP

Staff will continue to explore partnerships with community agencies and the County of Santa Clara to strengthen the Citywide Senior Service delivery model, SNP, implement the Age-Friendly Action Plan, and adapt the program to current and future operating requirements related to COVID-19.

CLIMATE SMART SAN JOSE

The recommendation in this memorandum has no effect on Climate Smart San José energy, water, or mobility goals.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

This memorandum will be posted on the City's website for the October 14, 2021 Neighborhood Services and Education Committee meeting.

COORDINATION

This memorandum has been coordinated with the City Attorney's Office.

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION/INPUT

This memorandum is scheduled to be presented to the Parks and Recreation Commission on December 1, 2021 and on the Senior Citizen's Commission on December 9, 2021.

CEQA

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Not a Project, File No. PP17-009, Staff Reports, Assessments, Annual Reports, and Informational Memos that involve no approvals of any City action.

/s/

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